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Bottoms up! – understanding competitiveness through the practice lens

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Abstract

Competitiveness policy has been firm-centred, standardised, incentive-based and state driven. In other words, a top down approach to competitiveness policy is been applied. This paper attempts to take a bottoms-up approach to understanding competitiveness policy. Bourdieu's habitus and reflexivity is used along with Maclean, Harvey and Chia's notion of life-history storytelling through the lens of sensemaking and legitimacy. The research employs a constructivist perspective to collect and analyse qualitative evidence from practitioners' will benefit the understanding of how competitiveness is actually played out in real life. The main contributions are that reflexive practitioner's lived experiences shaped existing practices and opinions of competitiveness. Individual practitioners when practicing strategy in their respective fields have different competitive thresholds. The struggle of becoming a competitive practitioner has bearings on being a competitive practitioner. The struggles behind becoming what they are justify the rationality behind the passive adoption of top-down policy. Three distinct threshold of competitiveness are presented: survival, progressive and strive.

Keywords: competitiveness, Bourdieu, habitus, reflexivity, sensemaking, legitimacy, practitioner, practice theory.

Word count: 4388

Introduction

The long-held view of the strategy scholarship is that gaining competitive advantage is not a linear process (Porter 1990, Prahalad and Hamel 1993, Prahalad 1994, Weeks 2007). However, in practice strategy is seen as a top-down process. Managers at the top of the organisation make decisions. Instructions are then disseminated downwards to middle managers and so on. Moreover, in reality top management see that by the time they make a decision to implement a strategic plan their competitive strategies are obsolete by the time the information reaches their table. Rather, by the time information that is gathered and detected, analysed and evaluated it is outdated and obsolete (Bartes 2015). Thus creating a difficult situation for top managers to make future strategic decisions. This paper argues that competitiveness in the context of strategy is far too complex (Sathre and Gustavsson 2009, Johnson and Turner 2015) a matter and existing concepts available are far too simple or adequate (Kline 1985, Gardner and Ash 2003) to explain a phenomenon such as competitiveness. By unearthing the 'many more facts' (Bourdieu, 1990: 8) about strategy and the practitioners' view of competitiveness, the study hopes to better explain how competitiveness is worked out in social practice. It is time that competitiveness strategies are understood as something that is done by the people in the firm (Splitter and Seidl 2011). Thus suggesting a bottoms-up approach to understanding competitiveness through a practice-theory standpoint.

By taking a sociologists' approach to examine practice-theory one gets to know the nitty gritty everyday activities of the practitioner (Yarker 2017). Which leads to a much richer understanding of what practitioners actually do rather than investigating the routines and practices involved in linking the competitiveness strategies to the internal processes of the organisation (Jarzabkowski, Lê et al. 2012). Actions and practices played out by practitioners in everyday events (Giddens 1984, Vaara and Whittington 2012) and the narratives generated that influence decision-making within firms (Feldman and Orlikowski 2011) are an opportunity to capture the true essence of competitiveness been played out. In other words, in framing competitiveness as the focal point of strategy and the unit of analysis the practitioner, strategy-as-practice can benefit from the exploration of everyday practices – routinised ways of thinking and acting (Sum 2016) from the bottoms-up.

To unravel how competitiveness is practiced this paper will start-off by locating competitiveness contextually within the narratives of government policy with a few used concepts of competitiveness. The paper then goes on to explain how competitiveness is 'actually carried out' by decision-makers in their respective fields. Further on the paper explains how strategy benefits from a bottoms-up approach to understanding competitiveness.

Competitiveness (as a noun) according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) means to 'competit', or to 'strive for' and goes on to explain competitiveness to be 'relating to, characterised by, or based on competition' (for example, competitive sports). Competitiveness in the political genre is seen to describing an important feature of the world's economy, as something that drives the distribution of wealth across the world (Martin 2004). For example, Cameron in his Chatham house speech (2015) states that Europe is facing a crisis when it comes to its competitiveness as other nations across the world soar ahead and Europe risks being left behind. He reiterates that his policies have gained inroads into help businesses compete. He suggested that lesser regulations, capital markets, and entrepreneurship are some of the enablers that the government has put in place for business to be competitive.

The competitiveness turn to policy

In the 1950s, the UK was the second richest economy in Europe; however, by the 1970s it had slipped to being the seventh richest, by the 1980s to ninth, and by the 1990s to eleventh in Europe (Kitson and Michie 1996). It has been argued that lack of incentives (Walker and Sharp 1991), subsequent government failure (Pitelis 1993, Cowling, Oughton et al. 1999) to support the industry, and privatisation (North 1993) were to blame. During the 1990s, the framework for policy development was based on economic performance and the continuous spiralling of the economy led to much debate on how to respond to the sluggishness of the manufacturing sector. Industrial policy was questioned with a view to reassessing its effectiveness vis-à-vis a wider approach to tackling the economic downturn. The shift from supporting individual sectors to the manufacturing sector as a whole inferred that the new industrial policy should take a 'competitiveness turn' (Ketels 2011) and include a broad range of measures aiming to create the optimum conditions to stimulate growth (Porter and Van der Linde 1995).

It is believed that current policy initiatives are largely made up of 'new' science and technological applications (Dumont, Spithoven et al. 2014, Galvin and Goracinova 2014, Tassey 2014) such as bio/medical/life sciences, micro-technology and manufacturing, to name but a few. With the objective of gaining competitive advantage strategic policies and plans reflect the relative strengths and comparative advantage (physically and virtually) in science and knowledge infrastructure. With location or proximity to universities, research labs and industrial hubs (Evans 2009) being key to gaining competitiveness. Such complex and intertwined activities are not so simple and straightforward to understand (Krugman 1994, Cheshire and Gordon 1998, Begg 1999, Polenske 2004, Magro and Wilson 2017).

Towards the end of the twentieth century the word 'competitiveness' had become firmly linked the economic policy and markets impartial behaviour (Conner, 1991). This echoed the theory of Adam Smith, for whom the concept of competition was related to winning and losing; for example, if a trade is not making a profit, it will lose its position and ability to trade. Unless it is able to improve its performance, a firm's market position becomes untenable and is not fit to survive; hence, it will ultimately 'cease to exist' (Krugman, 1994). In other words, competitiveness can be seen as a win-or-lose proposition (Wilson 2008). Despite the fact that issues around national competitiveness have constituted part of public policy for many decades, with this being a key phenomenon in understanding the distribution of wealth both nationally and globally, the phenomenon of competitiveness itself is still ill-defined (Porter 1985, Waheeduzzaman and Ryans Jr 1996, Begg 1999, Boland 2014) and problematic (Morgan 2014).

National to regional level policies

Many commentators have also argued that regional competitiveness or firm-based competitiveness cannot be resolved by macro level policies (Cellino and Soci 2012). Regional competitiveness policy has, until recently, been firm-centred, standardised, incentive-based and state driven (Amin 1999, Hill and Munday 2016). There has also been a reliance on income redistribution and welfare policies to stimulate demand in the less favoured regions, with the offering of state incentives at the firm level. Amin

argues that there is a common assumption in policy quarters that top-down policies can be applied universally to all regions (1999); in other words, there exists a one-size-fits-all approach to operationalising institutions at the regional level (Rodríguez-Pose 2013). This agreement seems to draw on the belief that at the heart of economic success lies a set of common factors such as 'the rational individual, the maximising entrepreneur, the firm as the basic economic unit, etcetera.' (Rodríguez-Pose 2013). Stewart (1993) argues that when the state makes policy, policy makers take into account the stereotyped 'economic man' (Williams, Williams et al. 2018) who is driven solely by self-interest and not the needs of the citizen more broadly (Vriend 1996), resulting in a stereotyped and limited range of policy instruments. That meant individuals change their behaviour when incentivised or sanctioned in terms of their calculation of gain versus pain (Stewart 1993). Regional developmental policies worldwide (Silva-Ochoa 2009) have remained very much embedded in the tradition of national development policies (Waring 2016), which is rooted in the belief that replicating top-down infrastructure, education and industrialisation policies is sufficient to generate greater growth and promote economic convergence (Pike, Rodríguez-Pose et al. 2006).

However, this paper argues that this one-size-fits-all (Veugelers and Schweiger 2016) approach certainly does not work (Todtling and Trippl 2005, Lahn and Stevens 2017) across all regions (Mohl and Hagen 2010). Economic success as Amin (1999) argues, lies in the assumption that economic policy is based around the premise that practitioners' will enact policy in a rationalistic way (the rational individual). Competitiveness policy is designed and focused on attracting new businesses (entrepreneurship) and 'the firm' is the basic unit of analysis when it comes to policy-making. In other words, the rhetoric regarding policy is that policy assumes that people (i.e. manufacturing practitioners in this case), will act rationally creating wealth. Thus in other words showing that policy ultimately benefits the firm and then goes on to benefit the practitioner's.

Moreover, firms continue to experience the growing complexity and uncertainty (Stanciu 2017) of today's dynamic business environment. Ways of developing strategies that meet and suit today's and, more importantly, tomorrow's needs in the macro-environment, are crucial in building a competitive edge. Government policies need to go far beyond the fiscal and monetary alone, as factors such as globalisation,

international trade, skills development, and culture need to be considered when developing national competitive strategies (Martin 1988, Amin 1999, Kitson, Martin et al. 2004). However, to achieve these conditions, there is a need for better coordination and integration at the government policy level between governments and regions. One may argue that despite the barriers to economic growth, the complexity and uncertainty in international trade require a new set of drivers (Lahn and Stevens 2017).

Specifically, the policy rhetoric set out by BIS in the UK, including policy on the resources that needed to be made available for businesses to be competitive. Key issues that stemmed from the study were funding, skills, trust, and adequate supply chain.

Table1: **Focal point of policy for competitiveness and their barriers**

Policy Factors	**Key Barriers for growth**
Funding	Janeiro et al (2016), Buckley (1989) and Bora et al. (2000) highlighted funding as a key barrier
Skills	Kharub (2017), Kuklick (2014) Argote (2002) and Curran (2000) highlighted internal competence
Supply chain	Zlatev and Vladimir (2018) Janeiro (2016), Vlaar et al. (2006) highlighted trust and identification of suitable partners
Networks and linkages	Lowe (2017) Norton (2016) Freel (2000), Beech and Huxman (2004), Kingsley and Maleck (2004), and Frobler et al. (2007) focused on the linkages (networks)

While policy support for UK manufacturing firms has been present for the past few decades, little attention has been given to whether this support represents good value for public money (Curran 2000), nor has there been an evaluation of the impact of these policies at the firm level (Bora, Lloyd et al. 2000, Curran 2000). Most theoretical literature talks in isolation about firm strategies and government policies developed to improve competitiveness. In contrast, the firm-level literature prioritises the understanding of the relationships between firms within supply chains (Ring 1997,

Frobler, Rukanova et al. 2007), and takes a performance improvement perspective in terms of how competitiveness can be increased within the market (Newell and Swan 2000, Cosson and Giusta 2004, Vlaar, Bosch et al. 2006). For its part, the government literature focuses on policies related to the 'rational, self-interested economic man' (Vriend 1996, Arshed, Mason et al. 2016, Stanciu 2017). This approach is arguably insufficient to understand the complexities of today's competitiveness agenda; what is needed is an increased focus on individual manufacturing practitioner as the unit of analysis and thus bringing out the true perception of competitiveness.

The basic tenants argued in this paper is that the top-down approach (Arshed, Mason et al. 2016, Qazi 2016) that policy takes is insufficient potentially opening a gap between policy and practice. The rationalistic approach towards policy based on the self-interested economic man (the rational individual), the maximising entrepreneur, and the firm as the basic economic unit, is self-defeating (Stewart 1993). The concept of the profit-maximising firm has moved on (Spence 2000). Manufacturing practitioners are now more concerned with skills, training, enterprise culture, access to finance, trade barriers and so forth (see Table-4). The impact of the economic cycles and subsequent recessions over the past century (Hauser 2010, Rowley 2011) has lessened the appetite of the self-interested manufacturer for development (Norman 2011). There is, therefore, a need to assess what competitiveness means within the context of the UK's economic growth policy and how this interacts with strategy (Simsek, Lubatkin et al. 2003) at the practice level.

The practice turn to competitiveness

The current research is focused on understanding the rationale behind how manufacturing competitiveness policies are viewed by practitioners'. As mentioned earlier, most of the research in this area has, to date, been dominated by a reductionist approach in unveiling the factors affecting competitiveness (Huggins 2003, Annoni and Dijkstra 2017). Conversely, this research argues that adopting a practice-based framework to explore these factors can probe the realities of competitiveness practice 'on the ground' in such a way that policy, based on more reductionist approaches, may not understand. Bourdieu (1990) argues that sociological analysis must establish the conditions of possibility and validity of organisational strategy. People perform, not only in all social walks of life, but also within organisational practices. Practices are

done and expected to be done as they are the right thing ‘to be done’, should be ‘seen to be done’, and because one cannot do otherwise (Bourdieu 1990, p. 18). Therefore, the research emphasis here is to seek to restore the meaning of these ‘done’ practices and to grasp the logic of how manufacturing practitioners’ perceive competitiveness.

As Orlikowski (2000) brings the attention towards a practice lens, he states that “a practice lens assumes that people are purposive, knowledgeable, adaptive, and inventive agents who engage with technology in a multiplicity of ways to accomplish various and dynamic ends.” Individual level practices that are created as a part of the cultural practices of communities and societies (Warde 2014, Talja and Nyce 2015). Hence, the identification of user needs would have to be directed to practices instead of single acts to be able to define the context of how people behave. It is strongly believed that in the context of competitiveness, the significance of individual differences, ways, and habits can be studied through the concept of practice.

Maclean, Harvey, and Chia (2012) present the notion of life history storytelling by elite actors (elite bankers) through the lens of sensemaking processes and becoming, for the purposes of articulating how legitimising is achieved. Similarly, the current research assumes sensemaking to be a collaborative activity that is used to create, legitimise and sustain (Holt and Macpherson 2010, Maclean, Harvey et al. 2012) competitiveness practices. In relation to manufacturing practitioners, sensemaking arguably offers credible insight and narrative rationality (Cunliffe and Coupland, 2012) to the accepted story(ies) offered by practitioners in their description of how they became who they are today. Practitioners were interviewed and data was collected and analysed to draw conclusions.

The researcher followed both Miles and Huberman (2014) and Saldana (2012) terminology and way of coding and categorised the coding process into three sequential steps, descriptive, analytical and pattern, which reflected the logical steps of the constructivist process of ranging from descriptive to inferential levels of analysis. The researcher dealt with theoretical concepts that make up the structure of this paper.

Sensemaking is defined as a collaborative activity that is used to create, legitimise and sustain (Holt and Macpherson 2010, Maclean, Harvey et al. 2012) competitiveness

practices. Semantic codes generated were: Understand, meaning, experience, insight, narrative rationality, accepted stories, how they became who they are today, life history, journey, presenting, points of stability, fluidity of organisational life, make sense of change, locating the self in time-space-context, connections, unstable reality, an articulation of the unknown, explain the unknown, illuminating the change.

Self legitimising is defined as enabling practitioners to gain recognition, respect, and the right to hold the position they are in. Semantic codes generated were: legitimating, gaining, recognising, respecting, honouring, getting status, prestige, elite, white collar, class, government, social norms, acceptance, persistence, accomplishing, cultural class, being committed, authority, being capable, desire, looking after concern.

Habitus is defined as a mental or cognitive system of structures. It is an internal embodiment of external social structures that a person acquires over the course of a lifetime. Semantic codes generated were: status, Given situations, work environment, culture, needs, desires, economic capital, social capital, cultural capital, symbolic capital, money, resources, plant and equipment, finance, raw material, knowledge, experience, connections held by people, creative class, quality of life, life stories, networks, social networks collective, opportunistic, belong to, partners, friends, values, religious belief, goodwill, quality management tools.

Reflexivity is defined as it enables one to make sense of a practitioner and how the individual becomes what he/she is at present in terms of identity. Semantic codes generated were: education, qualifications, networks, skills, communications, standard of living, elites, career, hardship, opportunities, challenges, roles in firm, job title, hurdles, standards of living, peer pressure, parental pressures, respect, immigration, luck, break, passion

Discussion and findings

It is argued that reflexive practice that people (in this case manufacturing practitioners) shape the perception of competitiveness. This is due to the life-history of becoming the practitioners they are today. In other words, habitus enabled the research to explore the ways in which manufacturing practitioners unthought (Bourdieu, 1990) thought, felt and acted (Wacquant 2005) towards becoming competitive. The practitioners' past

experiences, as understood through the reflexive lens used in the analysis shaped existing practices and perceptions of competitiveness.

The SAP more specifically the practice theory lens places importance on the significance of interconnectivity between practitioners of organisations as well as the role of relationships. This then coupled with the use of habitus and reflexivity enables us to explain the underlying patterns and processes of being and becoming a competitive practitioner. Thus providing a useful analytical framework to explain the underlying patterns and process of competitiveness policy and practice. Indeed, what should be borne in mind is that practice theory does not provide recipes for success; it provides a new mental model to understand the actual 'doing' of competitiveness behaviour. To the practitioner, being and becoming competitive is a complex embodied struggle for meaningful narrative between societal discourses and work practices (Cunliffe and Coupland 2012, Qazi 2016).

More specifically, the current research aims to break away from the prescriptive and broad-brushed rationalistic approach of competitiveness studies and draw on habitus and the reflexivity of practitioners' on how they become competitive. This approach enables the study of competitiveness to draw on the actual day-to-day practice of competitiveness in policy and strategy and thus understand how practitioners act in different ways in being competitive in their respective fields (Qazi 2016). By doing so, the study has been able to theoretically contribute to the sparse literature on the connection between policy and practice of competitiveness in SAP (Ibid).

Since the demise of the European colonial age in the 1960s, productivity in the manufacturing sector has increased rapidly (Lucas, 2000b). Both public and private sector investments helped to fuel this rapid growth (Krugman, 1987, Porter, 1990). With this growth, public prosperity and well-being began to improve with the common person on the street feeling the difference from the hardships of the pre-world-war era. However, the hardship and resilience remains in living memory to this day. These memories embedded in the manufacturing practitioner have unthoughtfully (Bourdieu, 1990) created different behaviours in different practitioners when it comes to perceiving competitiveness policy and practice.

Competitiveness as an ability is always associated with a certain economic entity. Studies in this area have perceived competitiveness as an ability to perceive their (practitioners) position and either improve that or at least keep it stable. Existing studies have offered this aspect of competitiveness rather vaguely and treated competitiveness to be 'countries, industries or firms' (Porter 1990, Porter 1998, Porter 2002, Lazzarini 2015, Musacchio, Lazzarini et al. 2015) ability. More recent studies have also suggested and extended the study of competitiveness to sub-regions and supranational organisations (Martin 2005). This research intends to break away from this traditional approach and draw on habitus and the reflexivity of the practitioner on how he/she becomes competitive. This approach enables the study of competitiveness to draw on the practice of competitiveness in strategy and understand how the practitioner enacts different strategies in their respective fields to become competitive. As argued in the literature review, the notion of competitiveness policy is prescriptive in nature and broad-brushed. Policy offers prescriptions of capabilities that lead to competitiveness in a rather abstracted, generalized way with little emphasis on practice. This research argues that competitiveness has three thresholds – survival mode, progressive mode and striving mode. These thresholds inform the position of the practitioner and their desire to be competitive and are explained.

Competitive thresholds discussed

Manufacturing practitioners through their own stories were notable for the ways in which discursive devices justified their actions of being competitive. The individual practitioner have their unique space (environment) in which they compete, and in which they are faced making decisions that are related to their internal and external environment (social space or field). These manufacturing practitioners whether employed, self-employed or business owners are constantly negotiating their position within their social field. Competitiveness has three thresholds – survival mode, progressive mode and striving mode. These thresholds inform the position of the practitioner and their desire to be competitive (illustrated in figure-1). The research conducted with manufacturing practitioners can be seen as three distinct modes of competitiveness. The struggles of becoming manufacturers justify the rationality behind the passive adoption taken by the practitioner's to develop systematic efforts to improve their competitiveness position. Sensemaking to the progressive practitioner is a complex embodied struggle for meaningful narrative by grasping fragments of

interplay between societal discourses, work practices (Cunliffe and Coupland 2012). The reflexive individual organises the information of those episodes (opportunities, hurdles and hardship) into personal meaningful narratives with a different extent of logic and rationality. These are explained.

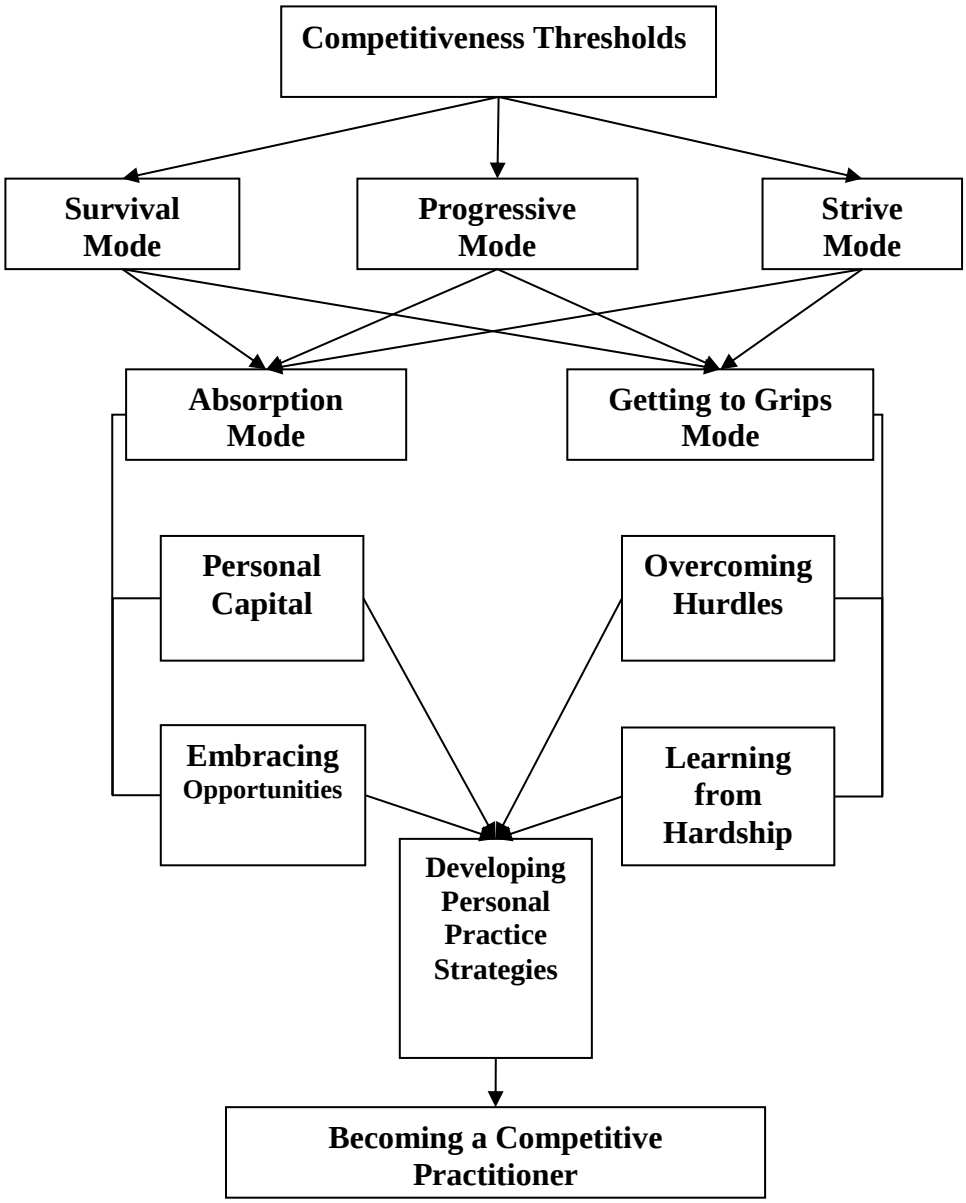

Figure-1: Competitiveness thresholds

Competitiveness – Survival Mode

Competitiveness can be seen as an 'ability to survive' as echoed by the interviews with practitioners. Some of the manufacturing practitioners interviewed during the data collection (for example MP-2, MP-14, MP-26, MP-27)[1] legitimised their actions of competitiveness to be related to maintaining the 'status quo' (Fitzsimons 2015, Ng and Kee 2015) by adapting passive competitive strategies. In other words, practitioners in this mode defy the traditional notion of growth and consider shrinking also to be an act of growth. The sense of 'accomplishment' (Vaara, 2002) and resilience (Brown, 1998) for the practitioners was to succeed through their 'abilities' and carry on with their lives in their meaningful way they perceived fit for them. While 'giving back' locate the practitioner as having accumulating material success and reputation and conveying the impression of a compassionate individual that puts the well-being of the firm specifically (or for that sake the family) and society in general above their narrow self-interest. In other words the stories as expressed by the manufacturing practitioners depict the becoming of a more complete human-being who selflessly shares his or her fortunes of success with others. Thus explaining the perception of the manufacturing practitioners sincerity and authenticity (Bourdieu 1997) to others over self-interest and personal reward (Suchman 1995).

Competitiveness – Progressive Mode

Furthermore, competitiveness can be seen as an 'ability to progress'. Some practitioners (for example, MP-15, MP-16, MP-18, MP-21, MP-22 and MP-23) encompassed 'anonymity' as a mechanism to be competitive. The practitioners adapted a responsive strategy to the changing environment and thereby improved their own (self and or firms) abilities to compete again reflecting the sincerity and authenticity to the self and others. However, their performance in relation to the general understanding of competitiveness differs. In this mode, the practitioner reflects on the personal capital he/she has been able to absorb into their practices over the years of being a manufacturing practitioner and getting to grips with the hurdles and hardship they have had to persevere.

[1] See full list of interview participants in Appendix-1

Competitiveness –Strive Mode

Some practitioners (for example, MP-8, MP-17, MP-19, MP-20 and MP-23) reflected a higher degree of competitiveness and developed strategies for the self and the firm they worked for. Practitioners 'ability to strive' indicated an ability to influence that competitive environment through more efficient operations, higher degree of development and superior qualities than their competitors. In other words the manufacturing practitioners with the ability to progress apply measures in order to catch up or overtake with the leading competitors (be it within a personal capacity, practicing within level, practiced at the region or country level). Competitiveness at this level validates the firm's ability to survive, to progress and to strive in markets that they are competing locally and internationally in. Where, business practitioners actively pursue competitiveness strategies and are unintentionally subjecting themselves to competitiveness, and do all things within their legal business means' to achieve a better position within their market both for the firm and themselves.

Contribution and implications

The study increases understanding of Bourdieu's framework and his concept of habitus and reflexivity. The existing literature on competitiveness has moved away from the been researched through the Porterian view of the self-interested individual (Fitzsimons 2015, Mickiewicz, Sauka et al. 2016) but by outlining a novel way of interpreting the perception of competiveness by drawing on post-structuralism and, in particular, the notion of habitus and reflexivity. It is suggested that such an approach can help to overcome the divisions between policy and practice, and view the manufacturing practitioner in a new light – as a reflexive practitioner.

Appendix 1: Summary of participants

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Code name	Role in sector	Type of firm	Business Location (England or UK-wide)	Role
DS-1	Education	Large Institution / Nationwide	North East	Curriculum Development
DS-2	LEP	Large Institution / Regional	North West	Head of Strategy
DS-3	LEP	Large Institution / Regional	North West	Head of Strategy
DS-4	Education	Large Institution / Regional	North West	Operations Team
DS-5	University	Large Institution / Regional	North West	Operations Team
DS-6	University	Large Institution / Regional	North West	Operations Team
DS-7	University	Large Institution / Regional	North West	Operations Team
DS-8	Association	Large Institution / Regional	North West	Operations Team
PE-1	Regional Development Company	Large Company	North West	Manager Business Development
PE-2	Manufacturing Association	Large / Nationwide	North West	Business Development
PE-3	Farming Products Association	Small Nationwide Association	UK-wide	Business Development
PE-4	LEP	Regional Advisory	North West	Head of Strategy
PE-5	LEP	Regional Advisory	North Wales	Head of strategy
MP-1	Farming Infrastructure Manufacturer	Small Regional Company	North East	Project Engineer
MP-2	Manufacturer of Garments	Small Regional Company	North West	Owner / Manager / Admin
MP-3	Paper Products Manufacturer	Small Company	Midlands	Owner / Manager / Business Development
MP-4	Farming Product Manufacturer	Small Company	North East	Business Development
MP-5	Pharmaceutical Manufacturer	SME Company	North West	Research & Development
MP-6	Precision Tools Manufacturer	Large Global Company	UK-wide	Business Development
MP-7	Manufacturer of Residential and Commercial Fencing Systems Globally	SME / Family Owned Business	South East	General Manager & Director of Operations
MP-8			South East	Chairman and Managing Director

Code name	Role in sector	Type of firm	Business Location (England or UK-wide)	Role
MP-9	Manufacturer of Residential and Commercial Fencing Systems Globally	SME / Family Owned Business		Senior Manager
MP-10				Senior Manager
MP-11				Senior Manager
MP-12				Production Team Leader
MP-13				Production Supervisor
MP-14				Production Manager
MP-15	Manufacturer of Safety Signs Worldwide	SME / Family Owned Business	Midlands	Managing Director and Head of Engineering
MP-16				Sales / Commercial Director
MP-17	Aerospace	Freelance Consultant	North West	Project Design Engineer
MP-18	Manufacturer of Shutters for Shops	Small Regional (NW / NE) Company	North West	Owner / Manager / Engineer
MP-19	Aerospace	Large Global Company	South	Project Engineer
MP-20	Aerospace / Education	Large Global Company	Midlands	Project Engineer
MP-21	Pharmaceutical and Automotive Parts Manufacturer / Education	Large Global Company / University	North East	Project Engineer / Principal Lecturer
MP-22	Advanced Manufacturing Firm / Education	Large Global Company / University	North West	Project Engineer / Senior Lecturer
MP-23	Auditing / Alternative investment Market	Large Global Company	North East	Director
MP-24	Automotive Parts Manufacturer	Large Global Company	North West	Team Leader Production
MP-25	General Supplier to Manufacturers	Large Nationwide Company	North West	Business development / Sales
MP-26	Optical Frames Manufacturer	Large Nationwide Company	North West	Design Engineer
MP-27	IT Systems Manufacturer	Large Nationwide Company	South	Systems Engineer
MP-28	Chemicals Manufacturer	Large Global Company	North East	Technical Business Development
Total Number of Participants: 41				

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